



USAID
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EAST AFRICA

QUARTERLY UPDATE

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Local Capacity Development Team Helping to Deliver Assistance Differently

Promoting Local Capacity: Last August USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah announced a series of operational reforms, collectively called “USAID Forward,” that will be advanced over the next few years. The reforms have been prioritized by the Administrator to strengthen the Agency’s development programs and promote more sustainable, effective results. The Procurement Reform goal covers six objectives that will affect the future of USAID Acquisition and Assistance. In response to the Procurement Reform agenda, USAID/East Africa organized a Local Capacity Development Team (LCDT), tasked with working on objective two: strengthening local civil society and private sector capacity to improve aid effectiveness and sustainability.



The USAID/EA Local Capacity Development Team met with Administrator Shah in Washington, D.C. to discuss ways to build local capacity in East Africa.

The ten member USAID/EA LCDT team is comprised of Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) and USAID’s newest tier of Foreign Service Officers, and is led by the Deputy Mission Director, creating a highly dynamic team. The team plans to build the capacity of local entities in East Africa by making direct grants to local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs).

A criticism of USAID is that it has become a “check-cutting Agency” removed from the development process. Working with local organizations directly as opposed to using large scale intermediaries is in line with the idea that sustainable development program implementation should be facilitated by local civil society. But the majority of USAID contracts and awards go to big international NGOs with the know-how and capacity to manage USAID awards. It has also been considered to be more efficient for USAID technical teams to work with a few, big, experienced implementers instead of numerous, small, inexperienced LNGOs. Two common concerns of technical offices regarding working with local organizations include an

increase in administrative burden and a perceived increase in risk.

Alleviating Administrative Burden: To relieve the administrative burden associated with direct grant-making, the East Africa LCDT is designed to be service-oriented, supporting technical offices that are interested in working with local groups. Technical offices may request assistance from the team to work on various stages of the contract and grant-making process including: writing program descriptions, receiving proposals and assessing their strengths by sitting on selection committees, participating in pre-award assessment surveys and monitoring and evaluation. Such tasks in the award-making process are time-consuming and the LCDT is preparing to step in to alleviate the administrative demands when making awards to local partners. The LCDT also plans to serve as a repository of information by conducting research on past and current capacity development activities; developing a database of local organizations that USAID has worked with in the past throughout East Africa; and uncovering lessons learned in building and strengthening local capacity.

Managing Risk: Working with local organizations means an increase in administrative burden and heightened risk. Administrator Shah has advocated for taking “responsible risks” which means that while there may be failure in some instances, taking steps and precautions when engaging with local organizations can also mean success. Such precautions include ensuring that cultivating local partnerships are rooted in strategy and using mechanisms that allow for both flexibility and a reduction of risk.

Way Forward: The LCDT has begun working with technical offices to explore opportunities where the LCDT may be of assistance. The LCDT is making presentations to USAID/Kenya and USAID/East Africa Missions and introducing team members and the LCD initiative within the broader *USAID Forward* reform. USAID Regional and bilateral technical offices have already expressed interest in working with the LCDT, and several local organizations have been identified as potential future partners. The East Africa LCDT is excited and pleased to work to advance USAID’s new Procurement Reform agenda.



USAID/EA staff participated in a training in Washington and are now working hard to implement an action plan to advance USAID’s reform agenda.
Photo: USAID/EA

East African Community Country Officials Agree on Need for \$4.1 Billion Investment to Improve East Africa's Transport Infrastructure to 2015

Government and private sector representatives from EAC countries concluded the Second East Africa Corridor Diagnostic Study (CDS) Stakeholders' Workshop in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in February. The workshop was opened by USAID/EA's Trade Advisor, the East African Community Deputy Secretary General for Planning and Infrastructure, and the Tanzanian Minister of Transport. The workshop enabled stakeholders to provide input on proposals made by the CDS on an integrated action plan to improve the performance of the Northern and Central Transport Corridors. The CDS has outlined key transit barriers in the region and prioritized potential interventions based on an economic analysis of the projected costs and the benefits of implementation. It is estimated that completion of the proposed projects would result in a 28 per cent decrease in the cost of transit along these two corridors. In addition to the proposed Action Plan, the CDS outlines suggested policy and regulatory changes. The CDS will be integrated into the EAC Master Plan for Transportation and submitted by EAC to the Tripartite - Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, EAC and Southern African Development Community -- for approval. Once the Tripartite approves the Action Plan, UK's Department for International Development (DFID) will lead an effort to further package the projects for a Heads of State Investment Summit to be held at the end of 2011. It is expected that the proposed projects will be implemented by the EAC, national governments, development partners, and private investors. The CDS was completed with financial and technical assistance from USAID, DFID, and the African Development Bank. Additional technical assistance was received from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, the World Bank and the European Union. USAID will not have the resources to support the large infrastructure investments recommended by the CDS. However, USAID will continue to support some of the other CDS recommendations including customs reform, improved clearance procedures at the region's ports and borders, and enhanced logistical performance amongst the region's private sector transporters. A draft of the report can be found at www.eastafricancorridors.org.

USAID Leads in Somalia Health Sector Coordination



Participants at the new health sector coordination structure meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya. Photo: USAID/EA

A new Somalia Health Sector Coordination structure was set up in February. Participants included health authorities and civil society representatives from all three zones of Somalia, donors, UN and international

nongovernmental organizations. This is the first time that Somalia health authorities and civil society representatives have taken a lead role in coordinating with international partners. The task force that designed the new structure was chaired by Mary Skarie, Director of the USAID/EA Regional Health and HIV/AIDS office and included representatives from all three zones of Somalia and from other constituency stakeholders. Somalia Ministers and Director Generals chaired each meeting. The Health Minister of Puntland, H.E. Ali Abdalah Warsame, stated: "It's a dream come true." The Somaliland delegation was also supportive of the new collaboration. The Health Minister for the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) expressed doubts that this structure could give Somali authorities the coordination voice they require. Donors are meeting with the TFG Health Minister to chart a way forward within the new coordination structure.

Trading for Peace on the Burundi/Congo Border



Traders from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)/Burundi border meet for discussions and trainings in Uvira, DRC February 2011.
Photo: USAID/EA

Navigating the Great Lakes Region is not a simple task. This is especially true at different border posts, where states, rules, norms, and trust often stop. These changes have consequences for people passing through the borders, especially for traders who traverse frontiers to sell their goods. The economic lives of these traders are made increasingly difficult when they come into conflict with border officials over rules and regulations.

USAID and Search for Common Ground are working to develop trust at the borders between Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burundi. In February, the Supporting Trading for Peace project began talks and training sessions between petty traders and border officials on the Burundian/Congo border.

Discussions with the traders, and then the border officials revealed that they were mutually suspicious, both accusing the other for contributing to daily disputes on the border. As discussions progressed, however, both parties began to reflect on their own roles. One border official admitted, "Some of us are not innocent," admitting to some of the causes of conflict between his colleagues and traders. In the end, both the traders and border officials expressed an interest to learn more from each other.

Mitigating Drought through Food Relief

USAID/EA's Food for Peace Program (FFP) contributes food aid to the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) to distribute to drought affected populations in the region. FFP has contributed \$24 million to WFP for use countrywide in Kenya so far this year.

The photo at the right was taken in Wajir, Northern Kenya.

The containers hold water that people are collecting and bringing back to their animals and homes in the more rural areas. Often people have to trek long distances to reach these water sources. Food aid during the lean times (January-April) often serves to buffer these communities from higher market prices and destructive asset depletion practices (e.g. selling of livestock and/or household goods to buy food, or engaging in unhealthy personal behavior.)



Photo: USAID/EA

Burundian Journalists Put New Technology to Work



Sister Concilie Nduwimana, director of *Journal Ndongozi*, demonstrating the improved photo quality of the new cameras.

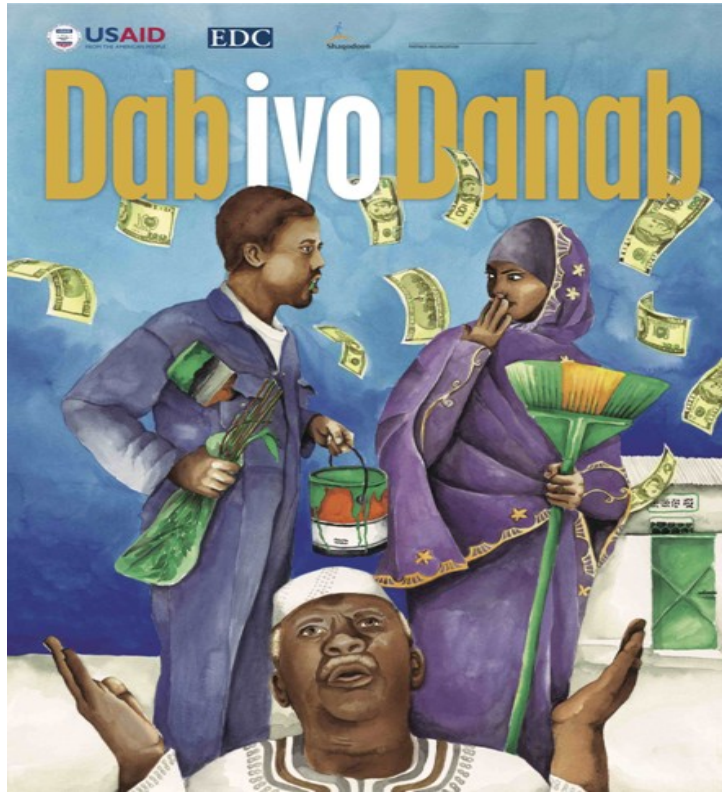
Photo: Philippe Sindayihebura

Burundian media plays a key role in informing the public of government initiatives and their progress. To enhance media operations and expand media coverage, USAID/Burundi's *Policy Reform Project* provided communications equipment including computers, printers, digital recorders, digital cameras, professional microphones, headphones, and a video camera to seven Burundian media organizations. This new technology is allowing media representatives to improve their reporting skills which gives media outlets the opportunity to produce more professional articles and increase their audience. Sister Nduwimana, Director, *Journal Ndongozi*, describes the changes that evolved as a result of the new tools: "Before, we did not feel comfortable printing photos because they were of poor quality, but now we are proud because our readers will see high-quality images... we also improved our pace of work thanks to the computer the project provided us."

USAID also organized training for journalists and advisors in the Ministry of Good Governance since the Ministry also received cameras to enable them to increase their visibility. The project works with the Ministry of Good Governance to promote improved governance, transparency and accountability.

Promoting Financial Literacy in Somalia

USAID launched an exciting new program for youth to promote financial literacy in Somalia through the production of a soap opera entitled *Fire and Gold*. The soap opera will be broadcast in the Somali language using audio mobile phone technology. The traditional Somali use of the story to educate, combined with technology, will enable USAID and implementing partner Education Development Center to connect to the “pulse of youth.” Movie style poster advertisements (see below) are displayed around Hargeisa and are already grabbing attention. During the three day launch workshop, ten partner organizations from all Somali regions were present.



Great Photos!



Young boys enjoy fresh water from a new USAID-constructed borehole in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

Photo: Mercy Corps



In Burundi, USAID/EA supports the distribution of 'life-cycle beads' to internally displaced women. The beads allow women to track their menstrual cycles and plan for their pregnancies.

Photo: USAID/EA